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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY, NOVEMBER 21, 2002

11. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for November 21, 2002. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

12. DIYARBAKIR FAMILY CHARGES POLICE WITH TORTURE (Evrensel) The family of a twelve-year-old Diyarbakir child claimed police had tortured their son while in custody. The child had been arrested during a police raid on his home in lieu of his 17-year-old brother. The family applied to the Human Rights Association (HRA) (for assistance), alleging police had blasphemed, kicked and slapped their son, and ordered him to wait on one foot during his half hour detention. Father said he would file suit against (responsible) police officers.

13. PRO-KURDISH EDUCATION DEMONSTRATORS CONVICTED (Evrensel) Diyarbakir State Security Court convicted seven Nusaybin (Mardin) people arrested for assisting and abetting the PKK (KADEK) by "demanding Kurdish-language education by marching with torches" in mid-February in Nusaybin. The convicts, who were among ten people arrested during the march, were sentenced to three years and nine months' imprisonment. Defense attorney Muharrem Erbey requested his clients' acquittal, saying (other) Kurdish education petitioners had been acquitted under the recent EU Harmonization Laws. Erbey said he would appeal to the Supreme Court, which he believes will overturn the verdict.

14. POLICE OFFICER CONVICTED FOR REVEALING STATE SECRET

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(Evrensel) Diyarbakir State Security Court convicted Cizre (Sirnak) Security Directorate Anti-terror Squad officer M. Sevkett Akyildiz for revealing a state secret by sending the names of DHKP-C and PKK members

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being sought to Milliyet and Star newspapers. Akyildiz was sentenced to six months' imprisonment under Article 229 of the Turkish Criminal Code. Two other defendants who were being tried while at liberty were acquitted.

15. HRA REPORTS CONTINUED VIOLATIONS

(Evrensel) A report issued by the Ankara chapter of the Human Rights Association (HRA) said there has not been a decrease in rights violations in prisons, including those in the Southeastern provinces of Adana, Malatya, Iskenderun (Hatay), Batman and Bingol. The report claimed that, during prison visits, attorneys had undergone humiliating searches, with their files seized. According to the report, inmates' health deteriorated due to arbitrary practices and they had been denied medical services and treatment. A relative of an inmate complained that prison guards / security forces had kept relatives waiting for hours, not allowing underwear, socks and sheets into prisons where these products were sold for relatively much higher prices.

16. NINETEEN DEFENDANTS RELEASED IN MERSIN NEWROZ CASE

(Bolge) The trial of 25 Mersin people arrested for "illegal demonstration, pro-PKK slogans and assault on security forces with sticks and stones" during the unauthorized March 21 Newroz celebrations in Mersin continued at the Adana State Security Court. The defendants were among 148 suspects arrested during the celebrations who are being tried in groups of 25 people at a time. Only 19 of the defendants being

tried in custody appeared for the hearing during which they denied ties to the PKK and requested their release. Their attorneys also requested the defendants' release. After a break, the court released the 19 defendants who were in custody and adjourned the trial until a later date due to missing documents in the file. Prison terms of one to three years are demanded for the defendants.
HOLTZ